

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 SCS-03 CAB-09 SCA-01 L-03 H-03

PA-03 PRS-01 USIA-15 FAA-00 COME-00 RSR-01 RSC-01

/077 W

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P R 131516Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8421

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGZN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMCONSUL AMSTERDAM

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

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E. 11652 NA

TAGS: ETRN, BE

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: STRANDEES

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 4633 (NOTAL); OPS CENTER-MARKS, AND
CLAPPEN-MARKS TELECONS

1. AS FORESEEN, AUGUST 11 SAW REPETITION OF STRANDEE PROBLEM AT
OSTENDE INVOLVING APPROXIMATELY 30 AMCITS. SMALL NUMBER OF
"BONA FIDE" POMAIR PASSENGERS ARRIVED AND WERE BOOKED
ON ALTERNATED (SCHEDULED CARRIER) FLIGHTS. NUMBER OF OTHER
PASSENGERS PRESENTED VARIOUS FORMS OF "VOUCHERS" WHICH POMAIR
REFUSED ACCEPT EVEN THOUGH SOME HAD FLOWN TO EUROPE ON POMAIR.
THESE INCLUDED A NUMBER OF EUROPEAN NATIONALS ATTEMPTING
TRAVEL TO U. S. ON ROUND TRIP CHARTER TICKETS, MOSTLY PURCHASED
BY RELATIVES IN U. S. WITH ASSISTANCE EMBOFFS, STRANDED
AMERICAN TRAVELERS CONTACTED RELATIVES, FIRENDS, OR TRAVEL AGENTS
AND MADE ALTERNATE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS (LAST EIGHT NOW IN
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BRUSSELS AWAITINGHARRIVAL NEW TICKETS AND EXPECTED DEPART FOR

U. S. IN NEXT FEW DAYS).

2. SITUATION LIKELY TO REPEAT ITSELF WEEKLY UNTIL END OF SEPTEMBER UNLESS NOTICE OF CANCELLATION OF FUTURE POMAIR FLIGHT TO L. A. REACHES ALL AFFECTED TRAVELERS. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, INTERNATIONAL TRAVELLERS (IT) LONDON AND THEIR AGENT "PARTNER TOM BOLO, MARINA DEL REY, CALIFORNIA, ARRANGED WITH POMAIR FOR A SERIES OF WEEKLY AFFINITY CHARTER FLIGHTS OSTENDE-LA. A. (AMONG OTHER POINTS IN U. S.). IT WAS TO SIGN CONTRACTS WITH VARIOUS AFFINITY GROUPS AND IN TURN TRANSMIT APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION TO POMAIR IN ORDER PREPARE FORMAL CONTRACTS. POMAIR FLEW SEVERAL OF THESE FLIGHTS BUT FINALLY BALKED WHEN PAYMENT AND ADEQUATE DOCUMENTATION NOT FORTHCOMING. POMAIR HAS NOW CANCELLED ALL FURTHER FLIGHTS UNDER IT ARRANGEMENT. MEANWHILE IT AND ITS RETAIL SALES AGENTS HAVE BEEN AND ARE SELLING TICKETS ON THESE FLIGHTS. WE HAVE NO IDEA HOW MANY AMCITS ARE PRESENTLY IN EUROPE EXPECTING TO RETURN TO L. A. ON THESE NOW CANCELLED POMAIR FLIGHTS BUT CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATE NUMBER IN HUNDREDS.

3. POMAIR'S CANCELLATION ACTION CERTAINLY INFLUENCED BY RECENT CAB ACTION (STATE 158078) ALTHOUGH PAYMENT DELAYS PROBABLY ALSO PLAYED ROLE.

4. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER DATED JUNE 2, 1973 (FURNISHED CONFIDENTIALLY BY BELGIAN CIVIL AUTHORITIES) CIRCULARIZED BY IT TO UNKNOWN NUMBER OF TRAVEL AGENTS. BEGIN QUOTE:
DEAR AGENT,

WE WOULD LIKE TO LET YOU KNOW ABOUT THE GREAT PROGRAMME OF TRANSATLANTIC CHARTER FLIGHTS WHICH WE HAVE NOW SUCCESSFULLY CONTRACTED FOR THE SUMMER OF 1973. WE HAVE DEPARTURES FROM OSTEND IN BRUSSELS ON THE BELGIAN AIRLINE POMAIR TO NEW YORK, NIAGARA FALLS, DETROIT AND LOS ANGELES. THE PASSENGERS DO NOT HAVE TO BE MEMBERS OF ANY CLUB OR ORGANIZATION AS WE WILL GIVE THEM THEIR MEMBERSHIP CARDS AND DOCUMENTATION AT THE CHECK-IN AT OSTEND AIRPORT OR, IF LONDON PASSENGERS, AT THE EASTERN NATIONAL COACH STATION, PENTONVILLE ROAD. OUR DEPARTURE DATES AND TIMINGS ARE APPROXIMATELY THE FOLLOWING:

LOS ANGELES - EVERY SATURDAY (IN EACH DIRECTION). COT
FROM LONDON IS 60 POUNDS INCLUDING THE LINK WITH B.A.F
AND FROM OSTEND IS 55 POUNDS.

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NEW YORK- DATES HAVE NOT BEEN FINALISED BUT WILL BE
APPROXIMATELY EVERY FRIDAY.
NIAGARA AND DETROIT - THERE WILL BE TWO DEPARTURES PER
WEEK IN EACH DIRECTION, USUALLY TUESDAYS AND FRIDAYS.
THE COST WILL BE 45 POUNDS ONE-WAY FROM LONDON AND 40
POUNDS ONE-WAY FROM OSTEND.

PASSENGERS WILL BE TRAVELLING ON ONE OF THE LUXURY DC 8 JETS
OWNED BY POMAIR. RETURN TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED "OPEN" AND WILL

BE BALID FOR ONE YEAR AS WER EXPECT THIS PROGRAMME TO LAST
FOR ONE YEAR. THEY CAN GO IN EITHER DIRCTION AS THEY WISH.
LOOKING FORWARD TO RECEIVING YOUR BUSINESS. END QUOTE.

5. OUR CONCERN NOW IS TO AVOID REPETITION OF RECENT LATE EVENING,
EMOTIONAL SESSIONS (TWO) PRESIDED OVER BY EMBOFFS AT OSTENDE
AIRPORT AS WELL AS AT EMBASSY. LAST WEEK'S EMBASSY-INSPIRED
HERALD TRIBUNE ARTICLE APPARENTLY WARNED LARGE NUMBER OF TRAVELERS.
POMAIR ALSO NOW INTENDS PLACE ADVERTISEMENTS IN HERALD TRIBUNE
AND LOCAL H-T REPORTER IS PREPARING ANOTHER STORY.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: AS MOST TRAVEL AGENTS CONTACTED BY THEIR
STRANDED CUSTOMERS APPEAR TO BE WILLING ASIST, WE SUGGEST
DEPARTMENT URGE IT REP TOM BOLO (BRUSSELS 4633) TO CIRCULARIZE
PARTICIPATING AGENTS TO NOTIFY THEM OF PROBLEM. WE WOULD ALSO
APPRECIATE ASSISTANCE ADDRESSEE POSTS IN BRINGING SITUATION TO
ATTENTION OF TRAVZLERS EXPECTING TO RETURN U. S. VIA POMAIR
FROM OSTEND.
CROWLEY

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